

April 3, 2015

The Rev. Dr. Roy Medley
Executive Secretary, The ABC in the USA
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Dear Roy,

First, I want to thank you for asking me to attend the C-TAC conference in D.C. in your stead. I will have to be honest, this is an organization with which I am not familiar. Further I assume you have some knowledge of the organization so will not spend time describing their work. Also I have enclosed a packet of information which was very helpful to me in getting my focus around their mission.

Second, let me make a general observation. In looking at the attendee roster and the presenters at the conference it is evident that although a wide spectrum of organizations involved in health care the heavy representation is acute care, academics/researchers, and national health care advocacy groups. Although Leading Age (AAHSA) is represented the nursing home providers are a minority.

As to the conference itself the focus of the presenters that spoke at the general sessions was two fold. First, they spent considerable time on the current state of affairs regarding progress or the lack there of on advancing the issues around the transformation of advanced illness care. The consensus is that great strides have been made but there remain many barriers to reaching C-TAC's goals at various levels, legislative, community, and medical practice. Second, they focused on how delivery of advanced illness care has changed. Starting with the old model "the doctor is the final word" which initially swung to "the patient is totally in charge" to what is now being advocated, "it is a patient – doctor team effort focused on the needs, wants and moral convictions of both".

Another focus was pilot projects around the country that advance the goals of C-TAC. One of the presenters was the director of the Alameda County Care Alliance. This is fairly new pilot project which is a partnership between the churches of Alameda County, CA and a major health care company. It only began in November of 2014. Their goals are very similar to those of the Memphis project mentioned below for which there is a description enclosed.

Two of the speakers were actually testimonials given by two persons who are living with advanced forms of cancer. Both were a testimony to the importance of the partnership mentioned above and the value of striving to live well with your disease. Both remain actively engaged in their professions, family and community. They were also a testimony to the significance of broad based community support systems which included faith communities.

The way the conference was structured one was only able to attend two of the workshops. I attended the workshop on Community and Faith Based Partnerships. The presenter is a professor of social services and health policy at Wake Forest. She presented on the Memphis Project in which she had played a major role. One of the enclosures describes the project but it is a remarkable partnership between churches in Memphis and a major health care company to advance the goals of improved advanced illness care. They are now trying to transplant the project to North Carolina. The remainder of the session was testimonies by participants in the Memphis project along with some other folk who are working on a smaller scale to spread information on advanced illness care through congregations. This workshop was led by the Interfaith and Diversity Workgroup.

The second workshop I was able to attend was Family Care Giver Support. The presenters were from the Center to Champion Nursing in America , AARP and the National Alliance for Caregiving. Their focus was on the family and friend caregivers who represent 80% of the care delivery to elders and those with advanced illnesses. At the federal legislative level there are bills working their way through the processes that would give increased tax relief to these caregivers as well some other forms of possible reimbursement. More time was spent on discussion from the audience than presentation which raised other significant issues around family care giving.

Takeaways: If I am correct C-TAC has been interested in ABC participating in the movement. My guess is that in particular they would like to have a presence from ABC on the Interfaith and Diversity Workgroup.

With that in mind here are some thoughts. It would seem to me that it would be appropriate for ABC to be at the table. The Alameda Alliance is being led by one of the ministers at Allen Temple in Alameda which means one of our ABC churches is engaged in a very important pilot project of C-TAC. My guess is that there may be other ABC congregations involved in like projects around the country or that they could be if in fact they were aware of the opportunities and knew that ABC was supportive. Second, unfortunately I missed his name, but my impression was that the Memphis Project on the faith community side was spearheaded by one of our retired military chaplains. So there again it may be that an ABC pastoral leader is engaged in a major project of C-TAC. Third in the discussion around caregivers there was much talk about the Parish Nurse program. At one time NM was actively promoting the program and I know that some of our member churches around the country participate is said. Personally and professionally I am a great supporter of this program and can see great value in ABC promoting it with the churches.

One final comment. It might be appropriate for ABC to be represented by someone from ABHCM. Many of our members are deeply engaged in community based delivery of care to elders. In come cases in smaller communities they are the primary elder care source and have used that to leverage new community based programs. I also think that the Parish Nurse program is a good fit with the delivery of care many of our members now offer.

Having reported to our Board following the conference they agreed that we would be willing to take on that assignment. However, the Association is not in a very comfortable financial position so we would need some assistance with costs of attending meetings, etc. This is just an offer and certainly open to further discussion.

Hope this is helpful. Again thank you for asking.

Blessing,

Garth Brokaw